

DRHS

Community to pitch in for dig

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Starting next week, residents of Duxbury will have a hand in unearthing part of their town's history.

The Duxbury Rural and Historical Society along with Craig Chartier of the Plymouth Archaeological Rediscovery Project are organizing a dig at what is believed to be the site of the town's second meetinghouse, next to Standish Cemetery on Chestnut Street.

What to bring on a dig

Water
*Trowel
*Metric Tape Measure
*Clipboard
*Pencil
Something to put on the ground to kneel on
Gloves
Bug Spray
**These items will be provided by the DR&HS, but you can bring your own.*

What to Wear

Hat
Loose Fitting Clothes, in Layers (It is Fall in New England, after all)
Boots or sneakers — no sandals or open toed shoes
Gloves

"Think about it," said Browne on Saturday at an orientation session for the dig, held at the Wright Building. "The meetinghouse was everything."



Dozens of historically-inclined Duxbury residents packed into the Drew Archival Hall in the Wright Building on Saturday to hear Craig Chartier of the Plymouth Archaeological Rediscovery Project give a talk on the upcoming Second Meetinghouse dig.

A town's meetinghouse served as the house of worship, courthouse and town hall, Browne said.

Chartier told the large crowd gathered at the Wright Building that they would be looking for the town's second meetinghouse, built in 1707. The first meetinghouse was where the cemetery is now. The third meetinghouse was constructed on Tremont Street.

Some initial ground penetrating radar scanning has been done on the site, Browne said. This is often a first step in an archeological dig and can

show where the foundation of the building is. The cost of the radar was offset by the First Parish Church.

"The radar has already indicated some interesting things about the site," he said. "Once that information comes in, we'll know where to dig."

Chartier is excited about the possibilities.

"This site has the potential to cover the entire period of New England history," he said. "We don't know what's out there."

The dig will take place from Oct. 6-18, and volunteers will work in three hours shifts.

People will be assigned different jobs including diggers, note-takers, photographers, washers and cataloguers. The site will be arranged in a grid, and volunteers will dig test pits along the grid. Then the pits will be carefully excavated.

"Archeological site are such a limited resource," Chartier said. "We want to do it right and for the right reasons."

Chartier told the interested volunteers they may not be finding entire artifacts — perhaps just a piece of a pot, a few

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Chartier brought along some examples of things the diggers are likely to find, including pieces of pottery, pipes and lead from glass windows.

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nails, the lead from a window, etc. However, he said a careful process and a trained eye will be able to spot these fragments.

"When you're actually out digging, you'll be able to see these things jump out at you, the stains and so forth," Chartier said. "When you dig, if you see any kind of funny shaped rock, call us over."

Even these little pieces can provide the team clues. For example, Chartier said the lead used to hold in diamond-shaped pieces of glass in old

windows often has a date stamped on it, or the name of the manufacturer.

"That gives you a real absolute date to work from," he said.

Although there is no concrete proof the second meetinghouse was situated on the Chestnut Street lot, Chartier said he was excited to get digging.

"There's a high likelihood something was going on here," he said.

For more information on the dig, visit www.plymoutharch.com



Craig Chartier will oversee a dig from Oct. 6-18 at a site near the Standish Cemetery that is believed to be the location of the second meetinghouse in Duxbury. The dig will be done by community volunteers and will progress in three-hour shifts.



Duxbury Rural and Historical Society President Patrick Browne introduced Chartier on Saturday. Any relics found at the dig site will be preserved by the society.